UNDERSTANDING THE ROLES OF FAMILIES, SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITIES IN BUILDING DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS THAT LEAD TO RESILIENCY IN ADOLESCENTS

by

Kristel Tavare

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree
in

School Counseling

Approved: 2 Semester Credits

_____
Research Advisor

The Graduate School

University of Wisconsin-Stout

May, 2004

The Graduate School

University of Wisconsin Stout

Menomonie, WI 54751

ABSTRACT

Tavare Kristel C.
(Writer) (Last Name) (First Name) (Middle Initial)

Understanding the Roles of Families, Schools, and Communities in Building Developmental Assets and Protective Factors that Lead to Resiliency in Adolescents.
(Title)

School Counseling Ed Biggerstaff May, 2004 56 pages
(Graduate Program) (Research Advisor) (Month/Year) (# of Pages)

American Psychological Association, 5th edition
(Name of Style Manual Used in this Study)

Concern for our nation's youth continues to grow with the complex issues and problems adolescents face today. Resiliency is a person's ability to be successful despite negative circumstances they encounter throughout life. In recent years, researchers shifted their focus from what causes children to fail to what encourages children to succeed when faced with adversity. This shift focused on protective factors and developmental assets that safeguarded youth and promoted resiliency. This research project includes a review of the literature regarding resiliency, protective factors and developmental assets. It also examines the roles of families, schools and communities in building protective factors and developmental assets. This information is essential to help clarify the roles that families, schools and communities play in building resiliency through

developing assets and protective factors among today's youths. Several recommendations regarding developmental assets, protective factors, and resiliency were made focusing on teachers, counselors and counselor training programs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the many people who have guided and supported me as I strived to reach this lifetime goal. First, I thank God for walking with me through my life and for his countless blessings. Thank you to my family and wonderful friends who encouraged and pushed me forward when I lacked the motivation needed to complete my goal. I need to especially thank my husband John for always believing in me with his quiet motivation, support and understanding of my busy schedule and late nights required to complete this paper. I must also send a special thank you to my son Christian who motivates me to be the best person I can be.

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to Dr. Ed Biggerstaff for his willingness to work with me and his ongoing support, encouragement, and dedication to education and his students. He demonstrates excellence in teaching and is a great model for educators today. Finally, I would like to thank my cohorts and the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Stout for the wonderful experiences they have provided for me through this program.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In 2000, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction published results from the from the 2001 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The survey was administered to 2120 students in ninth through twelfth grade in Wisconsin public schools during the spring of 2001. The results strongly supported the need for more guidance of our youth. According to the survey, most deaths in the United States among adolescents are unintentional. Car accidents account for thirty-two percent of these victims. In the thirty days prior to this survey, thirty percent of high school seniors reported drinking and driving, and thirty-six percent of high school students admitted to getting into a car with a driver who had been drinking alcohol. The second leading killer of our nations adolescents is homicide. Homicide advances to the number one cause of death for black adolescents and young adults. The third leading cause of death among the nation's adolescents is suicide (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2002).

Driving under the influence of alcohol, homicide, and suicide are the top three killers of today's adolescents (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2002). All of these causes of death are preventable. Despite community efforts to raise awareness of at-risk behaviors, many adolescents still live by the statement, "It's not going to happen to me" (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2002, n.p.). Protective factors that lead to resiliency continue to be challenged by risk factors facing adolescents today.

Our nation's schools traditionally address adolescent issues by developing programs that focus on existing adolescent problem behaviors. For example, school counselors and other educators offer services to adolescents who exhibit aggressive behaviors, depression, eating disorders, alcohol/drug use, teen pregnancy and suicidal ideation. The traditional approach addresses many of the negative behaviors exhibited by adolescents rather than using a preventative method that capitalizes on our knowledge of protective factors that can lead to resiliency.

In recent years, people began reevaluating the way these adolescent problems are addressed. Researchers have acknowledged that issues facing teens today are directly related to their actions and choices. Their issues lie much deeper than what we see on the outside. "If you scratch the surface of a cigarette smoker, you will find someone at higher risk of early and unprotected sexual intercourse" (Scales, 1999, n.p.). Directing attention to protective factors combined with risk reduction may increase the chances of an adolescent's success (Scales, 1999). Helping adolescents increase their positive behaviors adds to the resources they need to make healthy choices and eventually be happy, healthy, and successful members of society (Scales, 1999).

Search Institute is one example of a resiliency-focused program. Through their research, the organization identified forty developmental assets and then focused their attention on taking proactive steps, versus reactive measures, to help teens face today's issues (Scales, 1999). "The science on which they are based, their intellectual foundation, is the same trove of hundreds of studies on

child and adolescent development, prevention, risk reduction, and resiliency" (Scales, 1999, n.p.). From their research, the Search Institute has built a comprehensive asset development program that focuses on the whole child. The assets identified by Search Institute have been recognized as excellent predictors of an adolescent's success in the future. Benson states,

> "These assets offer a research-based framework for understanding what young people need to grow up successfully. They also offer a vision for communities and organizations to rally together in ensuring that all young people have the positive opportunities, relationships, skills, and competencies that they need to be contributing members of society" (Benson, 2000, n.p.).

According to Search Institute, developmental assets include both external and internal factors. Twenty of the developmental assets direct our attention to the environment around the adolescent (external assets). These assets involve other people in their life (i.e., family, friends, neighbors, teachers, and even strangers.) The other twenty assets focus on opportunities and values that each individual teen is responsible for developing (internal assets). It is important that adults understand the roles they play in adolescents' lives and what they can do to help teens build assets. External and internal assets serve as protective factors against risky behavior and poor choices.

In 1997, researchers at the Search Institute reported the average secondary student had only 18 assets, arguing that many adolescents do not have the assets they need for their success (Scales, 1997). "The middle school years are recognized as the last best chance for communities to ensure that adolescents have the crucial assets they need for experiencing positive development and avoiding problems such as early sexual involvements, alcohol

and other drug abuse, and school failure" (Scales, 1997, n.p.). With this knowledge, it appears crucial that every adult finds a role in building assets and makes a positive mark on our communities, particularly before high school.

Purpose of the Study

Concern for our nation's youth continues to grow with the complex issues and problems adolescents face today. With the large number of risk factors, a focus on protective factors that safeguard youth and promotes resiliency is needed. "Resilient individuals face unusually difficult situations in life without resorting to violent expression" (Edwards, 2001, n.p.). Increasing the number of protective factors in a youth's life is one strategy we can use to protect our nation's future.

The purpose of this study is to review the current literature that focuses on the forty developmental assets and other protective factors leading to resiliency in adolescents. This information is essential to help clarify the roles that families, schools, and communities play in building resiliency and developing assets and protective factors among today's youths.

Research Questions

There are three specific research questions of this study. These are:

1. What is known about resiliency and protective factors in adolescents?
2. What is known about Search Institute's Forty Developmental Assets?
3. What implications do Search Institute's Forty Developmental Assets and protective factors have for families, schools and communities?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in order to clarify their meaning for the purpose of this study:

Developmental Assets.

Those “relationships, opportunities, values and skills which make young people less likely to become involved in risk behaviors and more likely to succeed in school, relationships, and life” (Scales & Taccogna, 2001, n.p.).

External Assets.

Those “relationships and opportunities adults provide for kids” (Scales, 1999, n.p.).

Internal Assets.

Those “values skills and competencies young people develop to guide themselves, to become self-regulating” (Scales, 1999, n.p.).

*Prevention***.**

Those “protective factors that inhibit high-risk behaviors” (Search Institute, n.d.a., n.p.).

Protective Factors.

Those “building blocks that lead to such resiliency that enable an individual to overcome significant life stressors” (Zunz & Turner, 1993, n.p.).

*Resiliency***.**

Those “factors that increase young people’s ability to rebound in the face of adversity” (Search Institute, n.d.a., n.p.).

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This chapter includes a discussion of the research surrounding resiliency and protective factors, followed by a review of the 40 developmental assets. The chapter concludes with research that focuses on the roles that families, schools, and communities play in building assets and protective factors in today's youth.

Resiliency and Protective Factors

In recent years there has been a notable shift from the problem-focused model of at-risk children, to a proactive model that identifies reasons why children who experience similar challenging circumstances succeed when others do not. For years, researchers had been focusing on what was wrong with children who were failing. In the past few decades researchers realized they had been ignoring a question critical to understanding the healthy development of youth. Just like risk factors can be identified with those children who are failing, so can positive influences or characteristics that lead children to succeed. These positive influences are often referred to as protective factors (Gelman, 1991).

What makes it possible for some children to maintain their health even when all the odds are stacked against them? The focus on resilient children has led researchers to a variety of protective factors that promote resiliency. "Something clearly has gone right with these children" (Gelman, 1991, n.p.). A number of studies have identified a variety of both personality traits and protective factors in a person's life that encourage success in the face of adversity. Resiliency theory is based on the belief that individuals can overcome

hardship if protective factors have been established in their life (Krovetz, 1999 a). These protective factors can be internal, develop within the child, or through external family, school, or community support.

Although Werner and Smith (1989) were looking for risk factors in a person's life when they conducted their study, they quickly changed their focus to the many personality and protective factors that surfaced through their longitudinal study of children on the island of Kauai. The study followed children for two decades of their life, which enabled Werner and Smith to gain valuable information on resiliency and risk factors of these children at different developmental stages from birth to adulthood.

Werner and Smith (1989) identified a variety of personality traits that helped children face adversity. One factor was IQ. By the age of 10, resilient children earned substantially higher scores on the Primary Mental Abilities Test, than those who had developed serious problems. Adolescent resilient children also scored higher in the area of verbal communication skills than those adolescents who developed serious problems on the Cooperative School and College Ability Tests. The California Psychological Inventory and the Nowicki Locus of Control Scale revealed that resilient youth in adolescence had significantly better skills in five areas, including Responsibility; how reliable and dependable they were, Socialization; how the youth internalized their values and applied them to their life, Communality; the quality of how their responses fit the pattern within the CPI, Achievement via Conformance; personality factors and

motivation that leads to academic success, and Femininity; a person's emotional and social response to various situations.

Shapiro (1996) adds that children with a more positive personality overcome adversity more easily than those who do not. Gelman points out another specific personality factor that some children have within themselves. "One of the prime protective factors, for example, is a matter of genetic luck of the draw: a child born with an easygoing disposition invariably handles stress better than one with a nervous, over reactive temperament" (Gelman, 1991, n.p.).

Werner and Smith (1989) found that resilient girls commonly displayed a number of other personality characteristics over their peers who developed significant problems. "Resilient girls were more assertive, autonomous, independent, poised, self-assured, and vigorous than adolescent girls with serious coping problems, and made good use of whatever abilities they had" (Werner & Smith, 1989, p. 90). They also had a strong sense of internal control over their actions and life. A person's ability to take on both male and female characteristics, regardless of their gender, was also related to higher resiliency (Werner & Smith, 1989).

Werner and Smith (1989) also recognized a number of protective factors that encouraged children to be resilient in the face of adversity. One protective factor notable by the early age of two was a positive social orientation. As toddlers, resilient children were described as interacting in more positive ways with their caretakers and strangers than those toddlers who developed serious problems later on in life. Another factor that may seem obvious is that those

adolescents who experienced a lesser amount of total life stresses were more resilient than their counterparts. Also, resilient men and women reported problems with their parents and family relationships less often than those people who had developed serious problems. The majority of resilient youth had a positive attitude towards family and life school. Where as, only a few youth who were experiencing serious problems reported the same attitude toward their family and school. One key protective factor for these children was a support network. Those youth who were resilient identified a greater social support network of friends, family, and community members than those youth who were struggling.

According to Benard (1993) there are four characteristics resilient children often demonstrate. The first is social competency. Social competency is the child's ability to respond positively to others and develop relationships with peers and adults. The second characteristic Benard identifies is problem-solving skills. Resilient children are able to develop a variety of coping strategies and solve problems in new and different ways. Benard states, "Two skills are especially important: planning, which facilitates seeing oneself in control: and resourcefulness in seeking help from others" (1993, n.p.). The third characteristic pointed out by Benard is autonomy. Resilient children develop their own individual identity and are able to find a sense of control within their environment. Being able to detach from a dysfunctional family unit and seek satisfaction outside the family has been extremely healthy for children in alcoholic or mentally ill families. Lastly, Benard identifies a sense of purpose and a positive outlook at

the future as an important building block for resilient children. “A sense of purpose entails having goals, educational aspirations, persistence, hopefulness, and a sense of a bright future” (Benard, 1993, n.p.). Benard (1993) points to three specific protective factors that are built into the “profile” of a resilient child: caring and support, positive expectations, and ongoing opportunities for participation.

Pasternack and Martinez (1996) identified several factors that lead to resiliency through their research with the juvenile justice service. The number one characteristic leading to resiliency in juvenile delinquents was youth having a job before they were incarcerated. Pasternack and Martinez (1996) recognized five main protective factors that adults can encourage in youth to promote resiliency. These include an internal locus of control, self-esteem, cognitive skills, social skills, and instilling a sense of hope for the future.

Interpersonal relationships continue to surface throughout resiliency research. They are essential to building protective factors and resiliency in youth. There is no substitute for real relationships. Positive, caring, adult relationships are needed to support youth as they address the many issues they face. The connection between positive relationships and increasing protective factors and assets that lead to resiliency is clear (Vossler, 1996). When a child faces many negative experiences, yet becomes successful, the biggest factor pointed out in the research is the involvement of one caring adult in an adolescent’s life (Scales, 1999). Vossler (1996) identified five key issues facing children today that increase the need for more adult relationships in the lives of youth; isolated

family units, lack of available extended families, latch-key children, broken homes and lack of support for children, and barriers between adults and children. Shapiro (1996) adds that resilient children whose parents have problems search for “substitute adults” to be role models and leaders for them.

In general, most resilient children have several protective factors along with some personality characteristics that help lead to their resiliency (Gelman, 1991). However, the one protective factor that has surfaced repeatedly through the research is the presence of at least one caring adult in their life (Benard, 1993; Gelman, 1991; Krovetz, 1999 a; Krovetz, 1999 b; Scales, 1999; Scales & Taccogna, 2001; Shapiro, 1996; Vossler, 1996; Werner & Smith, 1989). “Fostering resiliency in children is based on deeply held beliefs that what we do every day around children really makes a difference in their lives” (Krovetz, 1999 a, n.p.). Caring adults can be found anywhere, in the community, extended family members, other parents, and teachers are just a few examples. However, resiliency research points out the significant roles that family members, schools and communities can play in building protective factors for youth.

Forty Developmental Assets

Dr. Merton P. Strommen founded Search Institute in 1958 through his work with the religious community. In 1957, leaders of the Lutheran faith community approached him to research and construct a new youth development program. His research focused on the needs of Lutheran youth and produced results that were extremely valuable. This led to the formation of the Lutheran Youth Research Organization. In 1967, the mission expanded its research to

include other religious institutions and was renamed the Church Youth Organization. Because of the continued popularity of Dr. Strommen's research, the organization grew further and extended its mission to become the Youth Research Center in 1969. In 1977, the name Search Institute was adopted to meet the ever-changing needs of the research organization. Due to Dr. Strommen's research, Search Institute became a focal point for research on youth development. After great success, Strommen handed over his presidency in 1985 to Peter L. Benson, the current Search Institute president. Strommen remains a key player at Search Institute today through his volunteer involvement (Search Institute, n.d.c).

Developmental assets first emerged in 1990 from the report, *The Troubled Journey: A Portrait of 6th-12th Grade Youth,* sponsored by the RespecTeen Program through Lutheran Brotherhood. This report identified thirty developmental assets. Search Institute continued to analyze the data to keep expanding their research to focus primarily on minority youth and youth from troubled communities. Between 1990 and 1995, surveys were given and informal discussions and focus groups were held (Search Institute, n.d.b). Students were surveyed with the original *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors,* in more than 600 communities with approximately 350,000 6th-12th grade students. The survey originally consisted of 30 developmental assets. Because of the research findings from the studies completed between 1990 and 1995, the survey was expanded to 40 developmental assets in 1996 (Search Institute, n.d.d).

Search Institute based the 40 developmental assets on scientific research and developed them through prevention and resiliency-applied studies (Search Institute, n.d.a). According to a comprehensive analysis by Search Institute of more than 800 studies and hundreds of publications regarding developmental assets, the research base is larger and stronger for some assets than for others. This is due to limited empirical evidence for the empowerment and positive values categories. The category of social competencies is also limited due to difficulty in measuring all aspects of this category (Scales, 1999).

The 40 developmental assets carry two characteristics that set it apart from similar research approaches. One major difference in asset development research is that it focuses on all children and identifying key factors to healthy development versus concentrating specifically on at-risk children. The other key component of asset development research is its strong emphasis on the roles that communities and adult relationships outside a child's family play in encouraging healthy child development (Scales, 1999). Asset development research suggests that everyone has a role to play in the development of our youth.

The framework of the 40 developmental assets identifies eight types of human development and the assets are grouped into them. Four of the categories (support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time) identify external assets. These rely mainly on support from families, schools, and communities as they are the three primary systems present in a child's life (Howard, Dryden, & Johnson, 1999) The other four

categories (commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity) cluster the internal assets, which rely on the individual's own personality traits and values.

What has research on the 40 Developmental Assets found? The majority of youth across the nation have not acquired enough assets to promote resiliency. "Developmental assets are powerful predictors of behavior across all cultural and socioeconomic groups of youth" (Benson, 2000, n.p.). Assets have shown to be defensive mechanisms against the use of alcohol, drugs, sexual activity, violent behavior, and poor school achievement. They are also identified as protective factors, which increase the likelihood of healthy child/adolescent development (Benson, 2000). Benson stated, "The more of the assets a young person has, the lower the involvement in high-risk behavior (protection), and the greater the positive outcomes (enhancement)" (2000, n.p.).

Through their diverse efforts, Search Institute points out the dangers facing youth today and the important role that everyone can take. The average youth identifies only 19.3 assets in their lives (Search Institute, n.d.b). Typically, younger youth experience more assets and girls report more assets than boys (Scales, 1999). Scales stated, "The dangers in older adolescents' lives are much greater, and yet the resources they can draw on to protect themselves and thrive are even scarcer than the resources young adolescents have, which themselves diminish rapidly in middle school" (1999, n.p.). One fifth of the students surveyed only identified between 0-10 assets. The research pointed out that the following assets were reported by youth the least: a caring school, youth being treated as

resources, reading for pleasure, the community valuing youth, and time spent in creative activities (Scales, 1999).

"Building developmental assets is about building positive, sustained relationships, not only among students and teachers but also among parents and students, parents and teachers, students and students, and among teachers and other school staff" (Scales & Taccogna, 2001, n.p.). Again, the research points to positive adult relationships as key to healthy child development. Most assets are carried out through constant and consistent relationships with caring adults.

One of the strengths of Search Institute's 40 Developmental assets is the flexibility and ease of implementing them in any setting. It doesn't take hours of in-service training or practice to start building them. It requires re-examining how one interacts with students and looking at current practices to identify where asset building already exists and where it can be added or expanded.

Role of Parents in Building Assets and Protective Factors

Early adolescence is a time of great change for youth. The adolescent is in search of independence, yet unsure of who they are. Erickson (1980) describes the beginning of adolescence as the identity versus identity diffusion stage. This developmental stage is a period of rapid growth, just like in early childhood with the addition of puberty. These changes challenge the adolescent to questions their previous identity and feelings about themselves. They are extremely apprehensive about defining their new social roles within the family, school and community systems and striving to carve out their path in life (Erickson, 1980).

According to Scales, “Parents play important, continuing roles as sources of support, caring, control and values for youth” (Scales, 1997, n.p.). Many parents see this as a time of detachment, yet the reality is it’s not. Instead, children still need to feel connected to their parents, but the parent-child relationship needs to be reexamined and the roles call for a change to meet the adolescent’s new needs. Adolescents seek control, freedom, and privacy in their lives, to help them meet the new physical, emotional, and sexual challenges they experience with puberty. Parents and adolescents often experience conflicting values during this time as well. The success of parent-child relationships in adolescence relies on a redefinition of roles and continued attachment (Scales, 1997).

Adolescence can be a window of opportunity for parents to create more experiences and encourage their children to become active members of the family, community, and society, and in doing so, help them meet their growing needs. Parents have many chances to encourage their child’s strengths and recognize appropriate ways to apply them and meet the needs of others and themselves. This helps give meaning to their lives and encourages them to connect the different aspects of self, family, community, and society (Scales, 1997).

Werner and Smith (1989) identified several characteristics families of resilient children have. Their study indicated that resilient children more often came from families that had four or less children. They stress the importance of both the quality and quantity of attention given to children from a primary

caregiver. Notice this caregiver does not necessarily have to be a parent, as long as it's a caring adult. These families also provided consistent guidance during adolescence. The family was described as being well connected and having a variety of people available to provide support to their adolescents, including extended family members and friends.

Many parents are already building protective factors and assets in youth through their daily activities and don't realize it. Listening to a child's bad day at school and remaining open-minded about their choices in hairstyle and clothes provides children with support they need to feel safe and accepted for who they are as an individual. Establishing and following guidelines and expectations with a child nurtures them to become self-disciplined. Encouraging them in extra-curricular activities and hobbies by attending games, providing transportation for them, and supporting their involvement provides them with opportunities to develop their own sense of self. All of these examples are simple things many parents already do to help build the external assets identified by Search Institute (Search Institute, 1998).

Internal assets are not as easy for parents or adults to provide for youth. The internal assets are not something anyone can give a child, instead they are assets that can be modeled and encouraged through parental involvement. Reading and participation in community learning by parents demonstrates dedication to education. Parents and families who volunteer to help others model affirming values and a commitment to serving others as a member in the community. Families who encourage their children's involvement in decision-

making and discussions about current issues provide teenagers with the chance to practice using critical thinking skills they need for making lifetime decisions on their own. Internal assets cannot be given to teenagers, but they can be reinforced and modeled for children to follow (Search Institute, 1998).

Search Institute (1998) suggests six strategies to help parents recognize and build assets in today's youth. These include: a change in thinking, focusing, modeling, nurturing one's own assets, working together, and staying involved. Shifting your thinking involves avoiding all the stereotypes that come with the words teenagers and adolescents. The negative connotations that these words have often distort parents thinking about the issues they are dealing with, with their own children. Instead of spending time thinking about all the things that could go wrong, parents should focus on what they can do to prevent problems before they arise and visualize the positive outcomes they want for their child's future.

Search Institute (1998) recommends focusing on a few assets at a time instead of trying to nurture and develop all 40 assets all the time. Parents and children should identify the assets their child is strong in and the one's that need the most attention. Then, as a family they can focus on the assets that meet their child's current needs.

Modeling is the number one thing parents can do for their children. How parents act and react when facing issues in their lives demonstrates their values and character to their children. Parents should examine their actions in regards to how they spend their time and money, realizing that these actions quietly

speak for themselves. They should examine how they treat other people and what these actions say about the value they place on relationships. Children learn less from what one says and more from how one acts (Search Institute, 1998).

Working together is a powerful way to build the parent-child relationship and develop the attachment that is needed by teens during adolescence. Parents and children should share their concerns with each other regarding those things that they find most frustrating. Together, parents and children should reexamine their roles in the family and the responsibilities they take. Give teenagers a chance to share their point of view and contribute to the decision making process when the issue is appropriate for them to be involved (Search Institute, 1998).

Lastly, Search Institute (1998) stresses the importance of parents remaining active in their child's life during adolescence and not stepping away. The type of involvement parents have in their adolescent's life must change, but the commitment needs to remain. Adolescents have a need for independence, however this need does not replace their needs to be supported and loved at this difficult stage in life.

Just as our nation's youth cannot develop to their fullest potential without the love and support from other people, neither can parents. In May of 2002, 1005 parents with children under the age of 18 in the United States participated in a telephone interview, exploring a variety of parenting issues. "Parents expect a lot from themselves and little from anyone else" (Abundant Assets Alliance, 2002, n.p.). The poll revealed five significant factors affecting parenting today.

These include: trying to parent alone, missing a strong relationship with their spouse or partner, feeling they are usually successful with their children, dealing with ongoing issues, and many things that could help parents would be easy for other adults to do (Abundant Assets Alliance, 2002).

The majority of parents surveyed seldom go to other family members, friends or their communities for help. When parents were asked who they sought out for assistance, 53% declared no one, while only 4% sought help from extended family, friends, and community resources. According to the survey, those who did seek help turned to family and friends and were unlikely to reach out for community support. However, African American parents were twice as likely to seek help from the community than white parents (Abundant Assets Alliance, 2002). "Eighty percent of those surveyed in this poll strongly agree that there is always something more they can learn about being a good parent" (Abundant Assets Alliance, 2002, n.p.). The poll also identified some of parents' top parenting struggles. Parents reported better understanding their teenager, being more patient with their child, and the chance to learn from other parents as concerns they would like more help on (Abundant Assets Alliance, 2002).

The Abundant Assets Alliance stresses the importance of parent's reaching out to others to help build assets and protective factors in their youth. Extended family, teen's friends, neighbors, schools, congregations and businesses can all support children and parents in the asset building challenge (Abundant Assets Alliance, 2002).

There are many simple things people can do to help each other out. Family members can do many things that parents can do, like attending extra curricular activities, helping with transportation, and providing love and support by listening to the adolescent or the parent when they are in a time of need. Parent's can nurture positive communication and good relationships by talking with their teenager about their friends and their influences on them. One's neighbors can help supervise, listen, and support teenagers just by spending time with them, playing a game, or stimulating conversations with them (Abundant Assets Alliance, 2002).

Another issue that surfaced in the 2002 parenting poll was that many parents are missing a strong relationship with their spouse or partner. Fifty percent of the parents surveyed reported having an excellent relationship with their partner. These parents were more likely to feel successful as parents. They reported facing less challenges and felt confident when dealing with parenting issues. They were also more likely to seek help from other people (Abundant Assets Alliance, 2002).

The third key finding in this study was that most of the time, the majority of parents felt like they were successful at parenting. They defined success with four measures. "Someone: whose children are respectful, exhibit good behavior, and have good values; who gives love to their children, who is involved and makes the time to be there for their children, and who helps their children lead a healthy, productive, successful life" (Abundant Assets Alliance, 2002 p. 6). Thirty four percent of parents reported feeling successful every day and 54% of parents

felt successful on most days. The study also found younger parents and African American parents were more confident than the other parents surveyed (Abundant Assets Alliance, 2002).

Parents today continue to face ongoing challenges. The top two issues that parents surveyed felt made parenting the hardest, were the demands placed on them from work and fighting among their children. The study identified parents who were facing more issues were not married, made less than $50,000 a year or described their financial situation as difficult, had children in child-care and did not feel a strong relationship with their partner (Abundant Assets Alliance, 2002).

The last major finding reported from the 2002 parenting poll was that what things parents thought would help them be more successful are things that all adults can do. These are as easy as saying some encouraging words. Telling them they are good parents. Finding other parents to discuss parenting issues with and seeking advice from professionals were other factors parents thought would be very helpful for them and increase their parenting skills. They also wished that other people who they trusted would spend more time actively engaged with their children. Lastly, they believed that having more flexibility at work would encourage them to be better parents (Abundant Assets Alliance, 2002). As a result of this poll, the Abundant Assets Alliance made two recommendations for parents. The first was for parents to make connections with other parents to learn from, discuss parenting issues, and go to for support. They also recommended that parents work on building a strong supportive relationship with their spouse or partner, and if they do not have a partner, with

other extended family members and friends to use as sources of support for themselves and their children (Abundant Assets Alliance, 2002).

Role of Schools in Building Assets and Protective Factors

Adolescents spend most of their time at school, so it shouldn't be surprising to hear that schools have a tremendous part in building assets in youth. Thirteen of the 40 developmental assets are directly related to success in school. With relationships as a central element for building assets, schools provide countless opportunities to build assets. Scales and Taccogna wrote,

> "It doesn't take a significant amount of time…it means rethinking what one already does in the classroom and refraining these activities in an asset-building lens—for example, greeting students by name, responding to student questions and concerns, providing students with differentiated assignments and communicating with parents" (2001, n.p.).

Many teachers already do these things; yet don't realize their importance.

Scales and Taccogna (2001) suggested looking at building assets in schools through five categories; curriculum and instruction, school organization, co-curricular programs, community partnerships, and support services. Within these five areas, they again direct the attention to building strong relationships between adults and students, as well as among classmates. There are numerous ways schools can build adult-child relationships. Through various teaching strategies, activities, school organizations, and other services, students can be provided with opportunities to observe, practice, and develop positive relationship skills that will encourage asset development and continue to be applied throughout their lives.

Scales and Taccogna identified six basic keys for asset building in schools.

- Everyone in a school has a job to do to help build assets. This includes everyone from administrators and teachers to bus drivers and food service staff (Scales & Taccogna, 2001).
- Every young person needs to develop as many assets as possible. It's important to encourage asset development in all students, not just students who have been given a label, such as at-risk (Scales & Taccogna, 2001).
- Relationships are the most important aspect of building assets. Building lasting relationships, helping youth make connections to their learning, and turning their focus to positive thinking and behaviors is all done through a caring relationship (Scales & Taccogna, 2001).
- Asset building is a continuous process. School staff adds to the assets that parents and other community members have set in place. (Scales & Taccogna, 2001).
- Sending the same message across all systems is crucial. Adolescents need to hear consistent message on similar topics from adults in their life across all the environments that they participate in (Scales & Taccogna, 2001).
- Continual reinforcement of assets is essential. Once a student has developed an asset it must continue to be reinforced. Just because

an asset has been attained doesn't mean it will automatically remain stable (Scales & Taccogna, 2001).

Schools can be organized to increase positive relationships through breaking large classes down into smaller communities by teams or houses, providing a mentoring time during the school day, using flexible scheduling, and keeping students and teachers together for years at a time. Before and after school programs are excellent sources of asset building in schools. Students can get involved in their chosen area and develop positive peer and adult relationships. These programs lend themselves as a natural place for parents to get involved in their child's interests and talents. They can also lead to a wide array of involvement through other youth and adolescent community sponsored programs (Scales & Taccogna, 2001).

Support services offered by guidance counselors and other health staff are a natural way for schools to meet the needs of their students and families. Programs such as peer mediation, parent support and education, transition programs for students entering or exiting the school, group counseling sessions based on relevant issues for students, and one-on-one counseling are all a part of building assets and encouraging students to be involved in their school and community (Scales & Taccogna, 2001).

Benard (1993) points out the fundamental need for a caring school environment, positive expectations and ongoing opportunities for participation as three important aspects that help build resiliency. The persons most often identified as a positive role model outside of one's family is a teacher. Schools

that have high expectations have more academic success with their students and provide a variety of learning opportunities. They help students identify their best learning styles and use a variety of techniques to help students become successful. They don't just rely on standardize testing to assess student performance (Benard, 1993). Benard (1993) challenges schools to provide students with as many opportunities to become involved in their learning and participate in important roles and experiences as possible.

Krovetz (1999 b) identified three factors that he observed as a high school principal that lead to student failure. The very first one he points to is classroom learning. Krovetz supports Benard (1993), focusing on the need for students to be involved in their learning and actively engaged. Krovetz states, "Many students find classroom learning irrelevant to their lives" (Krovetz, 1999 b, n.p.). Some students struggle with the essential skills they need to be successful in school, particularly reading. Others are bored with the repetitive nature of the classroom routine. This disengagement can eventually lead to truancy (Krovetz, 1999 b).

Krovetz (1999 b) identifies two other factors that turn students away from school. These include peer relations and physical education classes. Peer relationships can make or break a student in the school environment. If they are in the "in" crowd they have much higher chances for success. If they are not, students often feel threatened, nervous, and even scared to come into contact with other students who are in the "in" crowd. They feel disconnected from the school and alienated. Krovetz also pays attention to physical education classes.

Many students dislike the attention given to the “jocks” in the school during their physical education classes or they prefer to play sports in a less competitive environment (Krovetz, 1999 b).

To help students feel more connected and nurture a sense of belongingness to their school and community, Krovetz (1999 b) suggests schools foster a number of changes within their learning communities. “It isn’t something we do to children or a curriculum we teach them. It isn’t something that can be added to a school or community with short-term grant money. Supporting resiliency is based on deeply held beliefs that what we do every day around children makes a difference in their lives” (Krovetz, 1999 b, n.p.). Krovetz acknowledges the following practices in schools that enhance protective factors and in turn lead to resiliency:

- Students are grouped heterogeneously throughout the day and regrouped when appropriate (Krovetz, 1999 b).
- Students are engaged in cooperative learning or work on their own.
- Students who struggle with academics are identified and the school has set building blocks to help them succeed (Krovetz, 1999 b).
- Teachers have similar teaching styles that are used across grade levels and academic subjects (Krovetz, 1999 b).
- Teachers encourage students to use critical thinking to solve problems and make decisions and give all students an opportunity to be involved (Krovetz, 1999 b).

- Teachers answer student questions with a question to encourage self-exploration among the students and help them develop critical thinking skills (Krovetz, 1999 b).

Zunz and Turner (1993) point out three key practices for educators that support both Krovetz (1999 b) and Benard (1993). The very first component they identify is the striking importance of having a solid relationship with at least one adult role model. Positive attention from adults leads to increased self-esteem in adolescents. Zunz and Turner (1993) also identify a child's locus of control as an important factor in the development of resiliency. When children use a variety of means to solve a problem and are encouraged to think about problems through different points of view to determine what is in their control and what things are out of their control, they have a more realistic sense of self and are better able to face adversity. Lastly, they advocate for student participation, as did Benard (1993). Students need to be actively involved in their school and in "prosocial structures" where they feel connected and important.

Role of Counselors in Building Assets and Protective Factors

So what is the role of a school counselor in building resiliency in youth? Noonan (1999) pointed out techniques that lead to success in brief intervention situations. His focus was on the following protective factors: caring and support, prosocial bonding, opportunities for meaningful participation, high expectations, clear and consistent boundaries, and life-skills training. With those in mind, he pointed out eight strategies adults, especially counselors in a school setting can use when working with students.

First, when giving advice, the counselor should be brief. Advice needs to be offered and displayed in a caring and concerned manner and only offered once. Advice that is offered more than twice becomes “nagging” to the adolescent. When using this strategy, two protective factors are displayed, caring and support and high expectations (Noonan, 1999).

Removing barriers is another approach Noonan (1999) suggests for brief interventions. Like Krovetz (1999 b), Benard (1993), and Zurtz &Turner (1993), he stresses the importance of teaching clients problem solving skills. As a counselor, it’s important to assist adolescents in problem solving realistic situations that are affecting their current situation. “A client may be more than willing to make a change but be discouraged by a specific practical (e.g., cost, transportation) or subjective (e.g., fear of being alone, social anxiety) barrier” (Noonan, 1999, n.p.). This strategy is directly related to the protective factor of teaching life skills.

Providing choices is the third concept Noonan (1999) suggests. Providing choices maintains a sense of power within the client. If they are feeling limited by something the counselor suggests or does, they may automatically resist due to their feelings of losing control. When we are hoping for students to change a specific behavior they will be much more successful and dedicated to change if they have a sense of ownership and control over the strategies they use. Choices provide people with the chance to become involved in a meaningful way. Participation is one protective factor that has surfaced several times in resiliency literature.

When a client is looking to change a “problem behavior,” counselors often overlook the rational reasons clients have for continuing the behavior. One major role of the counselor is to limit the attractiveness of the behavior causing the client trouble. The rewards for their negative behavior often out-weigh the rewards they see if they begin the more desirable behavior. Respect and appreciate the client’s motives for continuing the less desirable behavior. It’s important for the client to be able to share his/her feeling in a safe environment. Then, the counselor’s role becomes more clear. They need to look for a variety of opportunities to weaken their incentives throughout their sessions together. “The most successful strategies engage the clients value system (not the counselor’s)” (Noonan, 1999, n.p.). Identifying the ways in which the positive and negative behavior impacts their future goals, aspirations, value, and dreams can help the client see more clearly how their current behavior affects their future (Noonan, 1999).

Role of Communities in Building Assets and Protective Factors

With parents and schools working together, protective factors and asset development will improve but cannot be maximized until communities also step up to the challenge. In order for adolescents to find meaning in their lives and feel valued, the community needs to be involved. The need for community involvement was evident in a survey conducted by Search Institute in 1996. Only 20% of youth surveyed reported feeling valued by their communities, leaving 80% of adolescents living in communities in which they feel disconnected,

without a sense of purpose. This asset is one of the least reported assets out of the 40 (Scales, 1999).

Recent reports from parents also point to the need for communities to change the way they look at adolescents. According to Scales, “A Public Agenda study found that the main reason Americans fail to do something about children’s problems is that they feel overwhelmed as they hear, see, and read about the extent of the problems” (Scales, 1999, n.p.). The 2002 parenting poll conducted by the Abundant Assets Alliance also revealed discouraging feelings felt by parents of adolescents. Only 11% of parents reported that they turned to community resources for help. Almost all parents are trying to raise their children alone (Abundant Assets Alliance, 2002).

Search Institute and the Gallup Organization conducted another survey in 2002. They interviewed more than 2,000 adults and adolescents to learn how both groups viewed youth-adult relationships. The study pointed out the need for adults to get more involved. The survey focused their attention on 18 actions adults could be doing to encourage asset development. Both adults and children ranked encouraging school success, teaching shared values, and teaching respect for cultural differences, as some of the most important things youth need from adults outside their own families (Scales, P.C., Benson, P.L., Mannes, M., Tellett-Royce, N., & Griffin-Wiesner, J., 2002).

Search Institute suggests several strategies for communities across the nation to build assets in youth. Communities need to support programs and policies that promote youth/adult interaction. Youth should also be involved in

identifying strategies that will connect people throughout the community. Communities should find ways to honor and celebrate all individuals, adults or children, who model positive relationships and behaviors in their community (Scales, P.C., et. al., 2002).

The research stresses the importance of youth involvement in the decision making and planning processes of activities and programs involving youth. “When youth participate authentically in neighborhood decision making, they are more likely to think of themselves as contributing members, particularly if they are significantly involved and if their input is valued” (Edwards, 2000, n.p.). Through active participation in the community, youth practice and develop skills needed for making lifetime decisions in the future. They are also able to evaluate and put into practice their own attitudes and value systems, as they are developing them in the context of the real world (Edwards, 2000).

A variety of community programs exist to encourage adolescent development and meet the ever-changing needs of today’s families. Different programs can be found in different communities across the nation. “Parks and recreation departments’ programs frequently include after school tutoring, community service, job training, leadership development, health education and developing social skills” (Witt & Compton, 2002, n.p.). The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) identified the increasing needs of children today and therefore changed the way they developed programs and their format to better meet the needs of teens today based on the following four observations.

- Changing Demographics: Cities today continue to face challenges due to the changing demographics. Recreation programs can be a vehicle through which teaching cultural differences can be learned, practiced and modeled (Witt & Comton, 2002).
- Concerns about negative youth behaviors: “During the late 1980s and early 1990s, many cities reported substantial increases in drug use and violent crime among youth, accelerated school drop out rates and increased rates of teen pregnancy” (Witt & Comton, 2002, n.p.).
- Growth in the number of latchkey children: The tremendous increase in double income families leaves many more children home alone between the hours of 3 p.m and 6 p.m. when children are most likely to engage in risky and or antisocial behavior (Witt & Comton, 2002).
- Concerns about educational attainment: Standardized testing has put increased strain on children, families, and schools striving to improve student achievement. The NRPA believes that communities can take part and encourage the educational goals of youth through community programming (Witt & Comton, 2002).

The NRPA also changed their programming to focus on five major protective factors that can help lead youth to resiliency in the face of adversity. They strive to provide youth with “A sense of safety, a sense of belonging, supportive relationships with adults, involvement in decision making and opportunities for leadership and involvement in the community” (Witt & Compton, 2002, n.p.).

Mentoring programs have become a major focus as a proactive strategy to keep youth on the right track. Mentoring programs refer to those programs that develop one-on-one relationships between adults and youth to provide social, emotional, academic, and career guidance (DuBois & Neville, 1997). One teenager participating in a youth mentoring program described what she thought was the difference between role models and mentors. “Mentors and role models are both people you admire and appreciate. The primary difference between them is that role models are often people you admire for a distance…Mentors, on the other hand, are up close and personal” (Orr, 2004, n.p.).

Why has mentoring become a major focal point for building protective factors in youth today? One of the strongest protective factors identified in resiliency research is the presence of one caring adult. Mentoring programs do just that. They match youth and adults and help develop positive relationships between adults and youth, thus increasing the youth’s support network.

Research also shows that mentoring programs offer a number of positive outcomes for youth involved. Mentoring has been identified with student’s increased success in math and science courses, as well as providing greater opportunities for gifted students in rural communities. Mentoring programs are given credit for their support of students at-risk, including juvenile delinquents and decreasing gang involvement in youth (Miller, 1997).

Schatz (2000) highlights that mentoring creates a number of benefits for the youth involved. It helps youth to build confidence in them and increases their self-esteem. At the same time mentoring also increases individual skills,

strengthens career interest, helps children identify how to use their talents in a creative way to benefit themselves and others, and provides youth with opportunities to reflect on and put into practice their own value systems and beliefs. “Mentoring is a vehicle by which students who are bored with or tuned out of the school environment can be “caught” in the act of living a true passion and practicing a related talent” (Schatz, 2000, n.p.).

There are a variety of opportunities in every community for mentoring to take place. “Any program that multiplies contacts between kids and adults who can offer advice and support is valuable” (Shapiro, 1996, n.p.). Shapiro states, “A little bit of help—whether an urban scouting program or some other chance to excel can go a long way in creating resiliency” (Shapiro, 1996, n.p.). Boy and Girl Scout programs peek the interest of youth in a variety of ways and actively engage youth in their community through action-oriented projects. At the same time they build relationships between youth and their peers, as well as connect youth to another adult role model. The same kind of mentoring and relationship building can take place through religious communities in youth groups. Many churches provide activities and community service opportunities through which youth take an active part in planning and implementing programs of service and change in their communities (Shapiro, 1996).

The largest nationwide mentoring program, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, is a great example of a resiliency-focused program. They center their energy on building relationships between adults and children and anticipate a drop in risky behavior to follow (Shapiro, 1996). Big Brothers and Big Sisters reaches out to

children living in single parent environments whose parents have volunteered them for the program. This program focuses their efforts around four major goals. The first is to help children seek out and define their talents. Secondly, they strive to promote success in school. By the mentor and child spending consistent quality time together, the mentor also tries to evaluate the child's social and emotional state and identify problems that they can work on together. Lastly, Big Brothers and Big Sisters program hopes that through the mentoring relationship parent-child relationships will be indirectly affected in a positive way. This program also provides counseling and refers families to other social services that may be of assistance to them (Abbott & Merredith, 1997). Recently, a study showed this program successfully drops the rate of drug use and school absenteeism by 50% (Shapiro, 1996).

Other family support programs across the nation also play a big role in helping families and communities nurture resiliency in adolescents. These programs strive to help families meet their needs in a variety of ways. The National Resource Center for Family Support Programs identified 7 key components of family support programs. These include the following: life skills training, parent information classes, parent/child groups and family activities, drop-in time for parents to spend with staff members and other parents, information and referral services, crisis intervention/family counseling, and auxiliary support services. These programs direct their attention to the strengths of the family and how the family is structured as far as rules, guidelines, and control. Family support programs also seek out families in need of additional help

through welfare programs and the juvenile justice systems (Scales, 1997). These programs provide great opportunities for families, schools, and communities to work together and help youth build protective factors and assets in youth that may be considered at-risk.

One major limitation of these family support programs, regardless of their area of specialty, is the inadequate training that their staff has in working with young adolescents. Twenty-two percent of middle school teachers reported having no special training in their undergraduate programs to help prepare them to work with young adolescents. The majority of family service workers' training is focused on early childhood education. Programs providing additional support to families and adolescents need to expand their training to develop a better understanding of today's adolescent (Scales, 1997).

Research surrounding the roles of communities in the lives of adolescents recognizes a number of factors that lead to powerful programs for youth. The most prevalent finding through the research shows that community programs that involve youth in the planning and decision-making procedures are most successful in creating meaningful experiences for the youth involved. "Too often, youths believe that adults plan for them, rather than with them. Recreation personnel sometimes forget that it's the journey, rather than the activity itself, that's most rewarding" (Witt & Compton, 2002, n.p.). Empowering youth and giving them responsibility creates a program that matches the interests and needs of the youth involved.

The research also shows that to build quality community programs, organizations need to invest in their staff members. It's essential that programs provide quality ongoing training for staff members to help them meet the growing needs of the adolescents they work with. This continues to be a challenge for many organizations due to a lack of financial resources. Another factor identified with successful programming is having consistent contact with the same person in the mentoring relationship. However, maintaining the same staff members over a period of time remains a challenge for most community organizations. Again, due to the lack of financial resources jobs that often provide a mentoring relationship pay very little and therefore lead to high turnover in staff members. "Recognizing that the most important factor in reaching adulthood is a positive relationship with a caring adult, many parks and recreations departments are replacing part-time jobs with full-time adult leadership positions" (Witt and Compton, 2002, n.p.). To improve the quality of community programs, mentoring positions need to find ways to offer competitive wages and increase the longevity of their staff working in a mentoring relationship (Witt & Compton, 2002).

Research continually points to the need for families, schools, and communities to come together for the sake of children. Many protective factors and developmental assets can easily be adopted into the lifestyle of any family, school, and community organization. Like schools, community organizations can look for ways to build protective factors and developmental assets in adolescents through activities they already do. Many community organizations would need to

make little change to better meet adolescent needs. They can find ways to use the strengths of adolescents, appreciate them, and spend time with them.

The 40 developmental assets program is based on all youth and looks towards the positive assets that help youth find success. Building assets in today's youth increases the number of protective factors they have to lead them to resiliency in times of trouble. To build protective factors and assets in adolescents, whether you are a parent or not, everyone has a job to do. Simply developing positive relationships with youth and spending time with them can meet many needs of an adolescent and at the same time, help build protective factors and assets that lead youth towards resiliency when faced with adversity.

Research on resiliency provides everyone with a base of simple strategies to use that increase protective factors and developmental assets in youth. Many of these strategies are already being done; others can be incorporated into the daily activities of families, schools and communities. The impact one caring adult can have in the life of a child is immeasurable. But what we do know is that it's the biggest factor leading to success in our nations youth. Unfortunately, some children face too many risk factors and resiliency when faced with adversity seems improbable. However, these children still need to be guarded by as many protective factors as possible to increases their chances of success one step at a time.

CHAPTER THREE

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

Adolescents today are faced with many challenges. For some of these children, facing adversity is something they've done all their life. For others, adolescence brings news issues to confront as they strive to carve out their own identity. Vossler (1996) points out five major issues facing youth today that increase their need for more guidance. These include isolated family units, the lack of extended families, latch-key children, broken homes, and barriers between adults and children.

So what can be done to help adolescents today? Protective factors and developmental assets have been identified to decrease the likelihood of adolescent risky behavior. The adolescent's own personality traits play a significant factor in the way they make decisions and handle stressors placed on them. Internal assets, 20 of which are identified by Search Institute, develop from within the adolescent also guide them in their decision making process. Yet, there is still more that can be done by other people around them.

Adolescents are not adults. They are still in need of love and guidance from others, including adults. All adults that work with, play with, or live with children have a responsibility to them. Adolescence is a challenging time for many youth. The 2001 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey demonstrated the need for adolescents to be monitored and guided during these difficult years. Car accidents, alcohol, homicide and suicide are among the top killers of adolescents

in Wisconsin today and all of these causes are preventable (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2002). Providing adolescents with the guidance and skills needed to increase positive behaviors enhances their ability to make healthy choices and avoid risky situations (Scales, 1999).

Research on protective factors and developmental assets has identified several characteristics and skills that help teens succeed. Benard (1993) found that adolescents with strong social and problem-solving skills were more resilient when faced with challenging circumstances. Also, those children who were more independent and felt a sense of purpose within them were more likely to make positive choices in risky situations. Pasternack and Martinez (1996) add these characteristics to the list of protective factors that lead children to resiliency; an internal locus of control, high self-esteem, good cognitive skills, and a positive view of the future. The most significant protective factor related to resiliency in adolescents is the presence of one caring adult in an adolescent's life (Scales, 1999). That places responsibility on everyone to get involved with adolescents and find their role in helping adolescents succeed.

Search institute has identified 20 external assets that families, schools and communities can all work to increase in the lives of children today. These assets are not something children can give themselves. Instead they must be provided to youth through external sources. Families, schools and communities are the primary sources of support for children. Therefore, children are dependent on these three systems to provide them with these external assets and protective factors.

Conclusions

The research surrounding resiliency, protective factors, and the 40 developmental assets clearly demonstrates that there are many things that can be done to help today's youth. One survey identified the number one reason why adults don't do anything to help youth is because they don't know what to do Scales, 1999, n.p.). However, the protective factors and 40 developmental assets identified throughout the research gives answers to those who raise the question; what can I do to help?

This research has many implications for the educational world today. Next to their family, adolescents spend the majority of their time at school; leaving school personnel with the potential to be the second most influential person in a child's life. Teachers and counselors are among those school personnel who have the most face-to-face contact with children. Counselors work side-by-side with teachers to help meet the needs of those children requiring additional resources either socially or academically to help them be more successful. Children in elementary school spend the majority of their day with the same teacher. These teachers have a tremendous responsibility not only to teach children the curriculum, but to also provide these children with as many protective factors and external assets as possible.

There are a number of specific actions teachers can take to increase protective factors surrounding youth today. The power of one caring adult was continually identified in the research as the strongest predicator of adolescent

resiliency. Teachers have the ability to be the one caring adult students need to succeed.

Teachers also need to find ways to work together with parents and other staff members to build protective factors and assets. As a teacher, one should make learning an opportunity to grow in multiple directions and utilize the many resources, including parents and community members to expand student-learning opportunities. Teachers should also look for ways to increase positive communication with parents and praise student success. Teachers need to embrace the opportunity to work with other staff members to implement proactive programs through the school that encourage the growth of protective factors and assets.

School counselors also play a significant role in providing children with positive experiences at school that can lead to an increase in external assets and protective factors. Counselors have the ability to work with students one-on-one, in a small group setting and in the large group setting through classroom guidance and school wide programs. Children who feel valued by their family and community more easily identify their role in these systems. Children need to be provided with opportunities that help them connect the three systems they spend the most time in; their family, school, and community.

Again the most important thing for counselors to strive for is building relationships between adults and children. This can be done a number of different ways. The counselor may find him or herself in a central relationship when working one-on-one with a student on a particular issue. When working in

small group setting the counselor can encourage positive social interactions between the group members as well as with the group leader, most often the counselor. When the counselor is working in the classroom environment or through a school wide program, the counselor has a variety of chances to build up the social network of the youth as well as help children identify how families, schools and communities work together.

Connecting children with people and programs in the community is one more way of providing children with positive interaction with other adults. Involvement in community programs and extracurricular activities is one protective factor that counselors can ensure are in place for students. When youth are involved in their community they feel valued by adults and understand the relationships that exist between families, schools and communities. Helping others is another way to help youth feel connected to others and valued as a person.

Providing youth with as many assets and protective factors as possible is something that must be done for all children. It's easy to look at those students who are not succeeding in a specific area and to develop a reactive program to meet there needs. However, counselors need to meet the needs of ALL students. All children need to be involved in programs that foster protective factors and assets and help them take a positive stand when faced with adversity. It's easy for counselors to get in the habit of only running small groups for those children who have something that needs to be "fixed". However, In addition to these groups, proactive programs need be available for all students

and encourage the growth of protective factors and assets. This in turn will limit the need for reactive groups and programs for youth.

In order for counselors to effectively develop programs that build developmental assets and protective factors, there needs to be specific instruction in counselor training programs. Counselors in training need to understand what protective factors and developmental assets are and what role they play in adolescent development. Counselors in training also need to experience and see successful counseling programs in their communities using specific strategies and programming to better meet the needs of students.

Counselors in training also need to understand how to build and organize programs that foster meaningful relationships between youth and adults. First, counselors in training need to develop and identify specific strategies that help teachers increase communication with their students, as well as with parents. They should also examine a variety of school and community partnerships to help children identify how schools and communities work together for the good of society. Counselors in training need to acquire information on community organizations available to provide assistance to schools, students and families and develop specific skills to effectively organize community and school partnerships.

Recommendations for teachers, counselors, and counselor training institutions

From the review of the literature, the following recommendations are made for teachers.

1. Teach children, not just information. Find out what students need on a personal level to help them have a positive learning experience.
2. Set high, clear expectations for students to strive for and encourage them to meet these expectations.
3. Help students discover and practice their own individual talents and provide opportunities for them to share their gifts with each other.
4. Provide assignments that encourage parents and children to discuss issues relevant to their lives and apply it to the school curriculum.
5. Communicate students' success to parents.

From the review of the literature, the following recommendations are made for school counselors.

1. Develop programs that connect the three systems students spend the most time in; their family, school, and community.
2. Provide opportunities for community members to get involved in the lives of youth.
3. Help children identify ways to serve others.
4. Focus on developing and implementing proactive programs for all students (not just those identified as needing additional services) that build protective factors.

From the review of the literature, the following recommendations are made for counseling training programs.

1. Provide counselors in training with accurate, current knowledge of protective factors and developmental assets that increase adolescent resiliency.
2. Provide counselors in training with opportunities to observe specific programs and strategies targeted at increasing protective factors and assets for adolescents.
3. Teach counselors in training strategies that help teachers increase communication with their students, as well as with parents.
4. Provide counselors in training with information on community organizations available to provide assistance to schools, students and families.
5. Teach counselors in training specific skills to organize and develop community/school partnerships.

REFERENCES

Abbott, D. A., & Meredith, W. H. (1997). The influence of big brothers program on the adjustment of boys in single-parent families. *Journal of Psychology, 131*(2). Retrieved April 21, 2004, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Abundant Assets Alliance. (2002). *Building strong families: Highlights from a preliminary survey from YMCA and Search Institute on what parents need to succeed.* [Brochure]. Minneapolis, MN: Author.

Benard, B. (1993). Fostering resiliency in kids. *Educational Leadership, 51*(3). Retrieved November 24, 2003, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Benson, P.L. (2000). Our greatest resource. *Parks and Recreation, 35*(10), 56-66. Retrieved October 15, 2002, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Edwards, C. H. (2001). Moral classroom communities for student resiliency. *Education Digest, 67*(2). Retrieved October 23, 2003, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Erikson, E. (1980). *Identity and the life cycle* (2nd ed.). New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc.

Gelman, D. (1991). The miracle of resiliency. *Newsweek, 117*(22), 44-48. Retrieved November 24, 2003, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Howard, S., Dryden, J., & Johnson, B. (1999). Childhood resilience: Review and critique of literature. *Oxford Review of Education, 25*(3). Retrieved April 22, 2004, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Krovetz, M. L. (1999 a). Fostering resiliency. *Thrust for Educational Leadership, 28*(5). Retrieved November 24, 2003, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Krovetz, M. L. (1999 b). Resiliency: A key element for supporting youth at-risk. *Clearing House, 73*(2). Retrieved January 16, 2004, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Miller, D. (1997). Mentoring structures: Building a protective community. *Preventing School Failure, 41*(3), 105-110. Retrieved April 22, 2004, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Orr, T. B. (2004). The power of a mentor connection. *Career World, 32*(5). Retrieved April 22, 2004, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Noonan, C. (1999). Brief interventions foster student resiliency. *Education Digest, 64*(8). Retrieved November 24, 2003, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Pasternack, R., & Martinez, K. (1996). Resiliency: What is it and how can correctional educational practices encourage its development. *Preventing School Failure, 40*(2). Retrieved January 16, 2004, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Scales, P.C. (1999). Reducing risks and building developmental assets: Essential actions for promoting adolescent health. *Journal of School Health, 69*(3), 113-120. Retrieved October 15, 2002, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Scales, P.C. (1997). The role of family support programs in building developmental assets among young adolescents. *Child Welfare, 76*(5), 611-636. Retrieved October 16, 2002, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Scales, P.C., Benson, P.L., Mannes, M., Tellett-Royce, N., & Griffin-Wiesner, J. (2002). Grading grown-ups. *How do American kids and adults relate? Key findings from a national study.* [Brochure]. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.

Scales, P.C., & Taccogna, J. (2001). Developmental assets for success in school and life. *Educational Digest, 66*(6), 34-39. Retrieved October 16, 2002, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Schatz, E. (2000). Mentors: Matchmaking for young people. *Journal of Secondary Gifted Education, 11*(2), 67-88. Retrieved April 22, 2004, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Search Institute. (n.d.a). *Background and history of Search Institute research efforts.* Minneapolis, MN. Retrieved March 18, 2003, from: http://www.search-institute.org/reasearch /assets/background.html

Search Institute. (1998). Building blocks of parenting. *Building assets: A solid foundation and room to grow.* [Brochure]. Minneapolis, MN: Author.

Search Institute. (n.d.b). *Levels of assets among young people.* Minneapolis, MN. Retrieved March 18, 2003, from: http://www.search-institute.org/reasearch /assets/assetlevels.html

Search Institute. (n.d.c). *The timeline history of Search Institute.* Minneapolis, MN. Retrieved March 18, 2003, from: http://www.search-institute.org/about search/history.html

Search Institute. (n.d.d). *The updated profiles of student life: Attitudes and behaviors dataset.* Minneapolis, MN. Retrieved March 18, 2003, from: http://www.search-institute.org/reasearch /assets/UdatedData.html

Shapiro, J. P. (1996). Invincible kids. *U.S. News & World Report, 121*(19). Retrieved April 17, 2004, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Vossler, B. (1996). *Mentoring: Just one caring adult*. [Brochure]. Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran Brotherhood.

Werner, E. E., & Smith, R. S. (1989). *Vulnerable but invincible: A longitudinal study of resilient children and youth.* New York: Adams-Bannister-Cox.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. (2002). Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey Executive Summary. [Brochure]. Madison, WI: Author

Witt, P., & Compton, J. (2002). Programming for the future. *Parks & Recreation, 37*(12). Retrieved April 22, 2004, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu

Zunz, S. J., & Turner, S. (1993). Accentuating the positive: Stressing resiliency in school-based substance abuse prevention programs. *Social Work in Education, 15*(3), 169-177. Retrieved November 24, 2003, from: http://libproxy.uwstout.edu